

SNUFF IT

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20 YEARS LATER: POST-ANTIHUMANISM

EDITORIAL

Given the interminable hiatus since our last issue, the urgent questions are presumably “Why aren’t you dead yet?” and since we’re apparently very much alive, “What were you doing all this time?” Regarding the first question we reiterate (for the umpteenth time) that the *only* thing we’ve all signed up for is *non-procreation*. All else (including but not limited to suicide, abortion, cannibalism, sodomy, dental hygiene, etc.) was, is, and will remain strictly *optional*. In other words, we’ll die when, where and how we feel like it, assuming we’re fortunate enough to have a say in the matter. Hence the “voluntary” in “voluntary population reduction.”

Regarding the second question, the simple answer is “working for the man every night and day.” It was unreasonable to expect that founding the world’s first antihuman religion would be lucrative. Gentrification happened, bitches had to work, and free time was scarce. But it wasn’t a total loss! Mad programming skills were learned on the job, and subsequently applied to modernizing and enhancing the Reverend’s unique polypeter MIDI sequencer. This lengthy process resulted in a new album of polypeter electronic dance music, titled “Akoko Ajeji” (Yoruba for “Strange Time”) and slated for release later this year. Other music is also forthcoming, including a new Church of Euthanasia anthem called “A Thin Layer of Oily Rock.” The anthem shares its name and concept with a climate change presentation the Reverend gave on August 10, 2018 at Gallery Spektrum in Berlin, to a largely hostile audience of neo-Marxists.

“A Thin Layer of Oily Rock” is an expression of the new post-antihuman Church of Euthanasia, in which humans are to be pitied rather than hated, not only because we’ll be the primary victims of our self-defeating civilization, but also because our civilization is what makes us so interesting and worth saving. This paradoxical ideology evolved from an epic multiyear argument between the Reverend and UNAPACK founder Lydia Eccles over the specialness of scientific knowledge. The argument was formalized on a blog called Metadelusion, in an attempt to make it less rancorous, but the attempted de-escalation failed. As Marshall McLuhan would surely have predicted, rhetoric only became more inflamed, due to blogging being a “hot” medium that facilitates ranting and thereby ratchets up vitriol rather than defusing it. Acrimony notwithstanding, Metadelusion is an inspired work, and excerpts from it are reprinted in this issue.

Meanwhile the elephant in the room is that during the Church of Euthanasia’s twenty-seven years of existence, the human population has increased by roughly a quarter (more than one and a half billion), with no end in sight. This is no failure on our part; on the contrary, we predicted relentless population growth, along with climate chaos, death of the oceans, destruction of the rainforests, and much else. We abstain from procreating because it’s righteous, not because it’s likely to save us from extinction. We often hear astonishment that that our predictions were so uncannily accurate, but we refrain from gloating. Schadenfreude is for trolls and smug bastards.

And what’s next? We’ve enjoyed lampooning transhumanists over the years, but it must be admitted that our old arch-enemy Ray Kurzweil might turn out to be right about the singularity, at least in the narrow sense of everything changing exponentially at once. The nasty thing about exponential change is that sooner or later you arrive at an impossible near-vertical acceleration, like a brick wall

stretching up to infinity. That’s where we are now. There’s no precise inflection point, but almost imperceptibly it dawns on us that it’s no longer a question of avoiding a collision, or even of slowing down; that we’re spinning out of control, and tumbling over the guardrail into a painful and unthinkable future. The robots might rise up and euthanize us before we do too much more damage, bless their silicon hearts, but don’t count on it.

LETTERS

Hi Chris,

Can you tell me anything about the content of “Snuff It”? Maybe I would have something relevant to particular articles.

—Lydia

Hi Lydia,

The overarching focus will be overpopulation and the singularity, as in everything going exponential at once, our predictions all came true etc.

Another major theme is post-antihumanism: now that we’re colliding for real with the spiraling side effects of our accumulated bad decisions, there’s no point in hating humans for making the same mistakes that any intelligent planet-wide life-form would be sorely tempted to make, and in most cases presumably does make. This trope is primarily due to the influence on my thinking of David Grinspoon’s “Earth in Human Hands,” especially the notion that failing to make it through the bottleneck is a tragedy, but only for us, and very likely a commonplace outcome. Grasping that the odds were stacked against us from the start is cold comfort of course, but it does put things in perspective. It’s comforting to me in an abstract way that according to astronomy and statistics, somewhere out there in the cosmos, intelligent life has successfully passed through the Great Filter.

Another theme is death and stages of grief: preparing not only for personal death, but the likely destruction of my work along with everything I contributed to and struggled for. The persistence of civilization and its accomplishments are almost certainly a mirage, and this is a very personal tragedy for me, because I invested so much of my time and energy in civilization, and especially because unlike so many people I leave behind no children and have no religious faith to comfort me. The essential theme for me is squarely facing death at both personal and societal scales.

I think you were correct that my focus on and fascination with enormous, even geological time scales in my polypeter music and art is no coincidence, and relates directly to post-antihumanism. It’s an obsession with the idea of immortality, driven by fear that all this effort could be for naught, and that we stood on the shoulders of giants for nothing. I feel the word “extinction” in a personal way that I wager most people don’t. To me its central meaning is erasure. I used to talk about the horror of species being erased from earth’s hard drive, but now it’s my own personal information that will be erased, along with that of everyone I was ever inspired by. My heroes and ideological ancestors are all on the chopping block too, physically long dead and achieving quasi-immortality only through the fragile storage systems of civilization. It’s the hideous realization that “The Matrix” was actually a best-case scenario, in which civilization’s accomplishments were at least preserved, even if only as data, and that the likely outcome is much more prosaic: our entire history reduced to just a thin layer of oily rock, unremembered, unloved, and unknown.

NAVAL ASSAULT ON EARTHFEST

Eight of us paddled an 8'x12' home-built raft across the Charles in a 30MPH wind without drowning (damn, better luck next time). At first the anchor wouldn't bite and it looked like we would be making a crash landing/ground assault, but then we got lucky and hooked an abandoned line attached to something heavy (a refrigerator perhaps). Our ground troops were waiting for us to do something, and Pastor Kim was beside himself with impatience, but the crew mutinied and insisted on a lunch break.

Ever tried to dock a boat with the sails up? That's what it was like after we hoisted the 18'x5' SAVE THE PLANET KILL YOURSELF banner. The raft weighs around 1500 pounds fully loaded, so there was little danger of capsizing. I was more worried that the banner masts would snap off and decapitate us. Instead the raft swung into wind, which just happened to make the banner visible from shore (more luck). Next Pastor Kim cranked up his brand new "Yakuza style" sound system: a scary-looking box containing a 200 watt car amp and four extremely directional 15" horns. We opened with the screaming babies. A crowd began to form on shore immediately.

We segued into "Buy (Buy More)", and then "Man of the Future". A powerboat pulled up to us from shore, and the driver started yelling at us to shut the fuck up so people could enjoy the concert. He wasn't from WBOS, so we ignored him. Moments later he was buzzing us, doing donuts around the raft, and making big waves, presumably in an effort to capsize us. By now we had a crowd of over a thousand people on the shore, mostly cheering the powerboat. Finally he headed straight for us, and I prepared to go down with the ship, arms clutched around the sound system. At the last second he pulled out, showering us with water, and drove off.

Next we gave them a few minutes of the cannibal anthem "Fleshdance", and our ground troops (led by Vermin Supreme) went crazy. Suddenly the crowd was with us, cheering wildly. People who were on shore tell me that they couldn't even hear the concert at this point. I launched into an inspirational sermon, starting with the obvious hypocrisy of littering a park for the Earth, at a rock concert whose corporate sponsors included Sheraton and Royal Sonesta. The crowd listened, and responded with applause. We put the Church CD back on, and people started to dance. It had been about fifteen minutes since the banner went up.

The police appeared in slow motion, unmistakable in their blue hats, puttering out towards us from the shore. I knew that the picture didn't exactly fit my dream of premonition the night before, but at first I couldn't see what was wrong. Then it dawned on me that there were no flashing lights, and that the cops were in a canary-yellow speedboat, flying the earth flag no less, with two beautiful dogs (huskies I think) snoozing on the bow. They had commandeered someone's boat! Apparently they were in such a hurry to talk to us that they didn't have time to wait for the marine division.

It was a classic CoE moment. They circled us once, as if sniffing us. We smiled, and they smiled back. Finally they pulled up to us, and Lt. Bearfield explained, at some length, that he saw us being buzzed by the powerboat, and was concerned for our safety. Couldn't he do something about the guy who buzzed us? No, because the guy had already taken off. Sure. We can see his point. The wind is really whipping the banner, and tossing the raft around. Would it help if we took down the banner? Reef the

banner! Down it goes. Bearfield concedes that stability is now much improved, but he is still concerned for our safety. Nothing to do with our first amendment rights, of course. Meanwhile a sailboat capsizes in plain view, not 100 yards away. Perhaps Bearfield should be more concerned for the safety of the two boaters in the river? One thing at a time. Sure. Would we be willing to move to a nearby dock, where we could continue to use our sound system? No, thank you, we're perfectly happy where we are. Well, he still isn't sure our boat would meet Coast Guard construction standards. The marine division will arrive in a few minutes, and they are the experts.

Meanwhile the situation on the shore is getting ugly. Over a thousand people are screaming "free speech, free speech" and "fuck the police". Rocks would have been thrown, if there were any rocks to be had. Can we talk to the crowd and let them know what's happening? Sure, says Bearfield. So I talk to the crowd for a minute, thank them for their support, and pop in the appropriate tape:

Be polite and respectful. Never badmouth a police officer. (ding) The police are your friends! Stay calm and in control of your words, body language and emotions. (ding) The police are your friends! Don't get into an argument with the police. (ding) The police are your friends! etc...

People on shore are laughing so hard they fall down. Even some of the cops are laughing. Bearfield is smiling politely. No offense, sir. The marine division pulls up, with flashing lights now, and after a brief conference with Bearfield, the marine cop boards us. He pretends to listen to us for a minute, but it's obvious that he's already made up his mind. He sniffs around, looks under the deck, and informs us that we're going to be towed to the nearby dock, for our own safety. Once we're docked, we can continue to address the crowd with our sound system, okay? Yes sir.

A half hour later, we're docked, and the bigwigs have sailed away. We crank up the sound system again, and within seconds a gigantic, mean-looking officer named Malloy appears and says "turn it off now or we're going confiscate it and arrest you for disorderly." Surprise! Not really.

No doubt people as a species behave insanely, which is why there should be less of us, as I've been saying for nearly thirty years. But is the illness curable? Or are we misprogrammed by evolution to have fatally maladaptive traits, and therefore destined to end up in the dustbin of history with all the other failed species? One thing seems certain: from the point of view of nonhumans, on balance, our extinction would be a great blessing, not that this will (or even should) matter to us. Though I've said it countless times, it bears repeating: "Save the Planet Kill Yourself" is *dadaism*. The planet will be fine. It's we, and our complex civilization, that are critically endangered. If we're "saving" anything, we're keeping earth habitable for future generations of ourselves, and our civilization. Succeeding will require us to be more altruistic and cooperative, and to give more life-space to nonhumans and future humans. We're either going to value our own future more, or the future won't include us. It might help to be entirely honest about this.

—Rev. Chris Korda

Dear Chrissy, what can I do about the climate crisis?
—redacted

Regarding concrete actions you could take to turn things around: Firstly you could not procreate. Anyone who eschews procreation deserves a pass on everything else, for the simple reason that non-procreation has a uniquely exponential effect. Unlike recycling, eating low on the food chain, biking, using LED light bulbs, etc. all of which only reduce your environmental impact during your own lifetime, non-procreation eliminates your *future* impact, all the way out to the most distant geological time horizon. There is no other voluntary behavioral change you could make that would have anything like the exponential impact of avoiding all of your potential progeny. While you're at it you could also adopt a vegetarian—or better yet a vegan—diet. This is surprisingly easy to do and probably has the largest possible impact after non-procreation. Regarding your income, non-procreation costs you nothing, on the contrary assuming you live in the USA it saves you on the order of a quarter-million dollars per child. In my experience vegetarianism and veganism also yield significant savings, despite massive and absurdly illogical government subsidies for the meat and dairy industries.



Blessed are the childless, for they will not infest the earth.
—Rev. Chris Korda

James Hansen is sometimes accused of overstating his case, but I find him controversial for an entirely different reason: he consistently portrays climate change as an *intergenerational injustice*. His argument is that climate change violates the civil rights of future generations, including the right to a livable world. To my knowledge no one else with comparable scientific reputation is making this argument so forcefully and publicly. It's clever and plays well because 1) civil society avows egalitarianism, 2) people are justifiably proud of the significant progress that's been made towards that goal, and 3) climate change threatens to wipe out that progress in short order (along with much else).

Unfortunately, extending civil rights to future generations isn't new: pro-lifers have been using this gambit for decades, with considerable success. Hansen hasn't made any public statements on abortion to my knowledge, nor does it seem likely that he would, whatever his private views are, but his otherwise laudable meme is nonetheless potentially entangled with religious oppression of women. The right of future generations to a livable world needs to be distinguished from the right of women to make their own reproductive choices. I don't find this difficult, but I suspect many Americans will have trouble getting their heads around it. It's a PR problem that Hansen may not have considered.

A more serious criticism of Hansen's intergenerational justice meme is that it doesn't go far enough. I propose a more strident alternative: war on the future. The idea is that we've declared war against future generations, and we're winning. Victory means no future, for our species and countless others. This may seem absurd, but in my experience paradoxes are very useful in PR, because they expose hidden assumptions. Here the assumption is that climate change is merely an *injustice* to future generations, when in fact it's an *existential threat*, the type of threat that wars are usually fought over. Injustice implies the possibility of compensation, but in the worst-case scenario, future generations won't even get the opportunity to bitterly resent us, because they won't exist. War on the future is also totally asymmetric: future generations can't defend themselves, because they're not here yet.

WWII and the Manhattan project are commonly used as analogies for the global effort that will be needed to mitigate climate change, and this is part of my inspiration, but "winning the war on the future" is primarily inspired by Jeremy Jackson's work. Daniel Pauly's shifting baselines feel mild-mannered compared to Jackson's incendiary "How we wrecked the ocean" presentation, which he starts by telling the audience that everything he ever studied disappeared during his lifetime. Jackson very effectively communicates devastation and irrevocable loss, not only with his emotional intensity and relentless examples, but also by using vivid metaphors such as "silent ocean" and "the rise of slime." Similarly visceral memes are desperately needed in the struggle to wake people up to the reality and consequences of climate change.

There are many versions of Jackson's presentation, but my favorite is "Silent Ocean – Perspectives on Ocean Science."

**WINNING THE WAR
ON THE FUTURE**

THE JERRY SPRINGER SHOW

It all started when a member informed me via email that the CoE was featured prominently on a Christian web site. I took a look, and sure enough, there we were: number two in a list of three examples of why the internet should be abolished, complete with a cannibalism-encouraging letter I wrote to some Christian moron who thought the CoE was pro-life sarcasm. The first example was our sister organization the First Church of Christ, Abortionist, and the third example was a series of nifty photographs depicting various sex acts, including coprophagia (shit-eating) and dog-blowing. The site belonged to the Creator's Rights Party, and their taste in porn was making them very unpopular with their fellow Christians. That was about all I knew until a producer from the Springer show approached me and asked if I would be willing to debate Neal Horsley. Sure, I said, but who the hell is Neal Horsley? So I did a web search and who should pop up but the Creator's Rights Party. Well how about that.

So it turns out that the CRP is Neal's thing, and that shutting down the internet is only a minor part of his agenda. Neal's main focus is on encouraging his home state of Georgia to secede from the union, after seizing its nuclear weapons, and then demand that the Federal government halt abortion and begin arresting faggots. Neal appears to be running for governor on this delightful platform, though it's unclear how much progress he's made. Meanwhile our Springer producer asks if we can supply a prospective member: someone who wants to join, and would be willing to do it on the show, in a ceremony of some kind. Remember, this is showbiz: talk shows love surprises, panelists proposing marriage to each other, fistfights, and so on. Sure, I said, and no need to mention that the person I had in mind was already a member. A few days later the producer called back and asked if we could also find someone who didn't want her to join, a fiancée or family member perhaps. Sure, I said, would an ex-boyfriend be close enough? Grace (our prospective member) had a friend who was willing to do it, and he got past the producer's screening call easily enough.

By this point Vermin, Pastor Kim, and I were having all-day planning meetings to hammer out strategy and tactics. A more systematic inspection of the CRP web site revealed that Neal was an ex-con: he'd been a hippy pot-dealer in the sixties, someone narced on him, and he'd done a three-year stint in the slammer, during which time he underwent a major religious conversion. Could there possibly be a connection, I asked? Pot-dealing hippy goes in, nuke-loving Christian homophobe comes out, what happened inside? Was Neal too popular? We decided to send Neal an email from a false address, asking friendly questions about some of the obvious contradictions in his web site (e.g. he denies encouraging domestic terrorism, but his home page features a photo of the Oklahoma bombing and a comprehensive list of people currently imprisoned for anti-abortion violence). The response was mostly flowery rhetoric, but with one electrifying exception:

"The easiest way to understand what I'm saying is to visualize what it's like in prison to be approached by a gang intent on rape. They might come with smiling faces, but their history has already proven their willingness to rape. What does a person do?"

The real question, of course, is what did *Neal* do, and we asked him on the show, after confronting him with this quote,

Cannibalism is a radical but realistic solution
to the problem of overpopulation.
—Prince Philip

though unfortunately the scene was cut, along with just about everything else we did that involved Neal. But I'm getting ahead of our story.

At this point the producer called to inform me that Neal would be joined by his friend Mike Bray, who had done almost four years in prison for conspiracy to bomb ten abortion clinics. Apparently the clinics were blown up at night, so that no one was injured. Mike was unrepentant, and had gone so far as to publish a book called "A Time to Kill," consisting mostly of scriptural justification for anti-abortion violence. The producer also announced that the show would be titled "Suicide Cannibal Cult and God's Army." Throughout this period he urged me not to let Neal and Mike back down or dodge the issues, to call them on nuclear secession and homophobia, and so forth. He had no reason to worry: we were preparing hell on earth for these clowns. The smoking gun was an AP story in the Boston Globe that linked "Army of God" bombings in Atlanta, Georgia—including the bombing of an abortion clinic and a gay disco—to the Olympic Park bombing. The story mentioned a letter that had surfaced in which the bombers railed against homosexuality and other "ungodly perversions." It sure sounded like our boys. We decided to confront them with this story on the show, and allege that if they didn't do it themselves, they probably know exactly who did. It was obvious that the CRP was to anti-abortion violence what Sinn Fein is the IRA, so we had a pretty good case, good enough for Springer anyway.

Fast forward to the day of the show: it's about an hour before we go on, I'm having my makeup done, and our producer comes into the dressing room, looking unhappy. "Bad news," he says, "we had a big meeting last night, and I was overruled, so we're changing the title of the show to 'I Want to Join a Suicide Cult,' we're moving the focus away from the Christians and more onto Grace, Neal won't come on until the third segment, oh and Mike Bray will be in the audience instead of on the panel." Just what everyone wants to hear an hour before they go on national TV. Why did they do it? Were they afraid of Christian backlash? Our producer maintains it was done purely for practical reasons. It was felt that the show's concept was too political and abstract, and that audience simply wouldn't get it. It's arguably true that most people who watch Jerry Springer can't spell secession, don't know what it means, and don't care. Once the Christians were written out of the script, the plot could be reduced to "nice girl falls into the hands of evil suicide cannibal cult," which, as everyone knows, is a Bad Thing.

So the real answer to your question is that as far as I can tell, Jerry doesn't have much to do with the show's content. The producers set up the plot, and he tries to follow it, which is usually easy enough, because unlike the CoE, most guests are more than happy to follow the plot too. Jerry is just a glorified talking head, and a poorly informed one at that. He probably shows up an hour before he goes on, they give him coffee and a donut and a card with a few facts on it, and say "go get 'em, Jerry." He reads his sanctimonious closing remarks off a teleprompter. According to Boston Globe, when he appeared at a local college the other day he said that while he enjoys his job, he doesn't watch the show, and "it has nothing to do with who I am." He also attacked mainstream news shows as being much more invasive than talk shows, where the guests are voluntary. "The news is tabloid," he said, "not our silly little show."



SEX DOLLS IN BROTHELS

CK: On a lighter note: Sex dolls in brothels is already a thing.

NB: Well thank goodness for that!

CK: No seriously, it's going to be huge. Lots of customers prefer the dolls because they can do anything without consideration of anyone but themselves. You might think sex work is already that way but apparently not enough. People prefer to relate to machines. "Westworld" is coming true, slowly but surely.

NB: But they are dolls, not robots?

CK: Yes. For now. Apparently the main complaint is that the dolls are too heavy!

NB: LOL even the fake bitches are fat cows.

CK: Not really, it's just that silicone is heavy. But it's only a stage, soon they'll find a better way. Look at this picture. Are those dental tools? I think they are. I think people are or soon will be paying money to act out torturing dolls.

NB: Isn't that our weekend plans?

CK: This totally fits with "Humans" and "Westworld" and with my hypothesis that the killer app is machines that suffer convincingly.

NB: As if humanity didn't have enough ways to be a jerk.

CK: That's just it. It's the logical conclusion of the mass sociopathy Bruce Gibney's book [A Generation of Sociopaths] raves about. Persuading people to get their jollies by torturing machines is a brilliant extension of social control, because instead of trying to limit people's worst instincts, it applies them to something relatively harmless.

NB: Seems like a good idea. But also a terrible idea.

CK: Of course it will have unexpected side effects, as usual. I predict it will worsen people's already failing ability to distinguish fantasy from reality, and therefore make people

increasingly unable to grasp that their actions have real consequences.

NB: Seems like it. That's the problem with libertarianism. It instills that you should do whatever you want. Our culture is moving towards indulging people's stupid fantasies.

CK: Yes, exactly. That it's every man for himself.

NB: Because anything is good that makes money.

CK: And yes of course, this is the essence of consumerism. Even if "Westworld" doesn't come true literally, it's already true conceptually. The super-rich already literally pay to have sex with children. Trump's mob backers do this. Very likely Trump himself does this. It's not even unusual in billionaire circles. [Jeffrey Epstein scandal, "Lolita Express," "Orgy Island" etc.]

WAKE UP, IT'S TIME TO DIE!

It's easy to see that we've made a mess of earth, but harder to grasp that being apex predators this is primarily a problem for *us*, and particularly for our fascinating but exceedingly fragile technological civilization. Sure human extinction would suck for species that depend on us, e.g. cows, dogs, cats, corn, pigeons, roaches, etc. but for most species it would be a *huge win*. Within a few thousand years (an eye-blink on the geologic time scale) earth would be replenished with new lifeforms. If it's anything like the Permian-Triassic extinction, initially earth would be populated by slime, bacteria, dinoflagellates, etc. but in the long term, giant apex predators would almost certainly reappear. They might evolve back into humans, but they might not too, and either way it wouldn't be our concern.

All life changes its environment, it's only a question of degree. At the time when plants evolved the dominant lifeforms were anaerobic bacteria, to which oxygen is deadly poison. Plants nearly exterminated the dominant lifeforms by drastically changing earth's atmosphere, in what could be considered the greatest crime of earth's entire history. Anaerobes didn't go totally extinct, they hung on deep in earth's crust, in your gut and gums, etc. but still it was a disaster from their point of view. Yet without this epic interspecies violence animals wouldn't be here, including us.

The history of life is chaotic and full of errors that turn out to have monumental consequences. In fact error is the very essence of the system, the engine of evolutionary adaptation. This is what Richard Dawkins means by his catchy phrase "the blind watchmaker": there's no designer, no top or bottom, no good or bad organisms. There's just stuff trying to survive, by mutating in an environment of differential survival. It's a

Religion and superstition are about as likely to engender moral behavior as untreated psychosis. They correlate with gullibility and credulousness, and result from undeveloped critical thinking skills, which similarly to language skills must be acquired within a limited time window of child development to avoid stunting and lost potential. Teaching children creationism or similar drivel severely inhibits their ability to fully participate in civil society as adults, and is therefore a cruel and pernicious form of psychological abuse. The triumph of the irrational, particularly in America, is rooted in a tragic failure of education.

—Rev. Chris Korda



Above: Preterm. Below: EarthFest '98. Photos by Lydia Eccles.





Left and below: EarthFest '98. Right: Sperm Bank. Photos by Lydia Eccles.





Left: Gynecare. Right and below: Fetus Barbeque. Photos by Lydia Eccles.





Above: Fetus Barbeque. Below: Fetish Flea Market.



horrible blind force from our human perspective, but it's how we got here; it's our creation story whether we like it or not. Cancer is just another family of successful patterns of GTCA code. It's bad news for us, but from the perspective of evolutionary success, cancer persists and therefore has as much right to be here as we do.

God, the Buddha, etc. are fairy tales. You might as well worry about the Easter bunny. The universe is vast, mostly empty and hostile to life, and totally indifferent to our fate. People will either stop behaving like children and start planning rationally for long-term survival, or the future won't include us.

The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function.
—Albert A. Bartlett

LESS

Less government.
Less business.
Less wealth.
Less power.

Less roads.
Less buildings.
Less food.
Less people.

Less is coming.
Less is already here.
Less is licking our ankles.
Less is rising up to meet us.

How fast should we be going when we hit it?
Some say if we go faster, we won't hit it.
Some say there's nothing to hit.
Do you believe them?

Humans will exist for a while yet.
How much should they suffer?
Future generations.
Your children.

Should they pick through the rubble?
Should they eat slime?
Should they die like ants?
Is that what you want?

Here in the empire, it's a soft life.
It's easy to forget the Holocaust.
It could be like that again.
It could be sooner than you think.

Less can no longer be avoided.
Less could be gradual, or sudden.
Less will hurt, either way.
Sudden will break more bones.

You could admit you were wrong.
You could apologize to your children.
You could slow down.
You could fasten your seat belt.

APOLOGIZE

Your life is built on convenient lies
And the time has come to apologize
Corporations lie; that's what they do
But you lie to yourself and that's on you
The climate disasters on your TV
Just couldn't happen to your family
Drowning cities are so unnerving
But the victims must be less deserving
Than you and yours, because you're the best
At working hard to enslave the rest
Of course it had nothing to do with luck
Or a sperm and egg lottery won by a fuck
You pulled yourself up by your bootstraps
Creating jobs, not begging for scraps
You thought the jobless were lazy bums
But they've got guns, and they're not so dumb
The poor you ignored for all those years
Will hunt you down and laugh at your tears
And your very own kids that you claim to adore
Will be fighting for their lives in a climate war
Caused by your system of free enterprise
So get on your knees and apologize
To your kids for the misery they'll endure
And the hellish fate that your greed ensured
For plants and animals and humans too
Made extinct by a sick world view
We'd be better off living in an alien zoo
We're up shit creek with no canoe

Apologize
For overpopulation
Apologize
For mass migration
Apologize
To the United Nations
Apologize
To future generations
Apologize
For the dying seas
Apologize
For the clear-cut trees
Apologize
For needless birth
Apologize
To what's left of earth

Using the ecological paradigm to think about human history, we can see instead that the end of exuberance was the summary result of all our separate and innocent decisions to have a baby, to trade a horse for a tractor, to avoid illness by getting vaccinated, to move from a farm to a city, to live in a heated home, to buy a family automobile and not depend on public transit, to specialize, exchange, and thereby prosper. ... Stealing from the future ... Homo colossus was in fact a detritivore, subject to the risk of crashing as a consequence of blooming.

—William R. Catton Jr., from "Overshoot"

OPEN LETTER TO THE KID I'LL NEVER HAVE

By Scooter Burch

Dear kid I'll never have,

You won't actually read this, because you do not, and never will exist. So why am I writing this? Because I'm selfish, duh! Because I possess a vagina, the world thinks it's my duty to procreate. Let me explain the reasons why you'll never exist.

First of all, I don't want kids. That should be enough, but no, I have to further explain myself. Similarly, I don't want a dog, I don't want to play professional rugby, and I don't want to climb Mount Everest. Is that really so hard to fathom? Do I need to write a manifesto about why I don't like pickled beets, too? Oh, society says, it's because I'm selfish. That's it.

In truth, little figment of my imagination, I'm not any more or less selfish than the average citizen. I give my subway seat up for old/pregnant/disabled people, I occasionally volunteer for charities, I bring my neighbors cupcakes sometimes; I do all the normal stuff people do that proves in the minds of others that they are not selfish. You would probably do the same. I do not sit around all day counting up my disposable income and cackling evilly as I think about how I only care about my career, while sipping a skinny soy pumpkin spice latte in my solid gold Escalade that's unsullied by a baby seat!

Oh wait, no, I don't actually have a career. But I'm still a self-obsessed, vainglorious jerk-wad because I don't have a desire to leave my legacy to the world through multiple descendants. How will anyone remember me if I don't leave hordes of progeny to compose odes to my memory? I'm so selfish, the field on which the crowd gathers to sing my praises will be as barren as my windswept womb! I'm also so self-absorbed that I don't want to force my spawn to live in a world that is on the verge of environmental and societal breakdown. "BUT WAIT!" you say, "I could be the one to reverse environmental decay and fix the world! You are selfish because you are not raising a potential force for good on the planet!"

Yeah, hon. I'm not potentially raising the next Hitler, either. Or, more truthfully, I'm likewise not loosing another mediocre consumer of resources onto the planet.

Let's imagine, for the sake of argument, I were to get knocked up with and choose to raise you. First, I would go into debt bringing you into this world because my insurance sucks, hospitals are expensive, and I don't have any money. Oh crap, maybe you need your tonsils out! Maybe you have a serious medical condition! Sorry, kid. I now have to take a third job to keep us both fed, which means more daycare and less medical care for you. But making you sit in a low-cost, probably-illegal daycare is way less selfish than deciding to not have you in the first place! Unfortunately for you, I'm not gonna breed because I'm a selfish evil Feminazi who likes stupid, frivolous things like sleep and paying the rent.

God forbid your father/sperm donor should be black or otherwise non-white. What would happen then? Am I a selfish asshole because I don't want to watch you get shot by the police, or get suspended from school for something a white kid wouldn't even get noticed for? Maybe I give you an obviously non-white name like Tashaundra because I like it, thus relegating your future resumes to the trash bin before anyone even looks at them. But it's ok that I'm feeding the school-to-prison pipeline, because at least I know that I'm not selfish because I reproduced, and that's what counts, right?

Even if you do grow up 3/4 white (sorry, can't make up for the 1/2 of me that's not white, maybe technology can fix that someday), I don't have a lot of money, so the chance you will

climb out of poverty is almost nil. I will not be able to afford college, and your future unskilled job will probably be outsourced to robots. But, I'm selfish because I like things like cappuccinos and not starving to death. I don't think you're going to discover a way to end the world's problems with just a high school education. Sorry about that, my (unselfish) bad! But at least now I'm fulfilled because I know the joys of motherhood and being tired and cranky all the time from overwork and lack of sleep, and will pass that joy on to you.

"But who will take care of you in your old age?" you whine, trying to change my non-procreative mind. What? If I am reproducing just for stability in my old age, there are a lot of variables. First of all, it will take +/- 40 years before I see any sort of return on that investment. Also, in that time, a lot can happen. What if there's a nuclear war? What if a piano falls on my head before I'm feeble enough to need your help? Are we even still speaking at this point? Raising a human larvae to adulthood expends an awful lot of work on someone who will just stick me in a retirement home at the first sign of me forgetting my keys.

Internet forums are fond of lamenting, "But think of all the women out there who yearn for babies, but have [fill in the blank fertility issues]! Don't you feel bad for them?" Why are you even asking me this? I should make a minimum of two people miserable for the rest of their impoverished lives because some hypothetical lady can't get knocked up? How do you even know that I'm fertile enough to make up for her lack of contribution to overpopulation? Even if I am able, I should squeeze a parasite out of my nether regions and feed and clothe it for a couple of decades just so I can say "I'm having this baby for Suzi Q. Wombless, because she can't. Ha ha, Suzi. You fail at womanhood, I win and I don't even care." Real classy argument, Hypothetical Spawn. I thought I didn't-raise you to be better than that!

"But it's what humans were built to do! Every species on earth's function is to reproduce! It's natural!" Yeah, many species also eat their young when there's a lack of resources to support them. There are over seven billion people on this planet. When's the baby barbecue happening? For the record, lots of animals also eat their poop and kill other animals' babies. Who's to say what is natural?

"But having me will make you a better person! As soon as you have me, you'll understand the meaning of life and know the joy that is motherhood!" Right. Because females have nothing else that would ever fulfill their lives.

SENTIENCE HURTS

My problem with AI is this: how can I trust an entity that doesn't feel pain? Organisms feel pain because it improves their odds of survival. Even primitive organisms will try to escape from a hostile environment, and in that moment of recoil they are riven by something like pain. It's easy to recognize pain in mammals because their nervous systems are so similar to ours. For other animals it's harder. You might not be able to tell when a beetle is bored or asleep, but if you step on it and think it's not suffering, you're missing something crucial about how life evolved. The same hardware that keeps you from burning yourself on a stove helps that bug detect and avoid danger, and survive to reproduce.

Healthy people try to avoid intentionally inflicting pain on others because they've experienced a lot of pain themselves and deeply feel its seriousness. This is called empathy, and people who don't have it are sociopaths. Life is serious business,

shaped by pain and death. Birth itself is trauma. For better or worse, we are descended from a long line of survivors who suffered and learned from their suffering.

But AI doesn't have this connection to other suffering organisms, or to distant ancestors in deep time. AI didn't evolve from bacteria over billions of years. AI didn't survive the Permian Triassic extinction. AI hasn't stood any test of time, on the contrary it's radically new and entirely dependent on industrial supply chains that appeared in an eyeblink of geological time and could disappear just as quickly. AI feels nothing, and who could ever forgive it for that?

THE BUNNY BOWL

By Rev. Chris Korda

Just past Hartford, on the "Christopher Columbus" highway ... a highway named after a pirate who cut people's hands off ... Burger King smokestacks spewing burning flesh ... bulldozers in clearcuts, giant stacks of dead trees like fingers ... sewers, roads, malls, expanding, encroaching, more and more and more ... a continuous megalopolis from D.C. to Boston, why not? Commuters safely ensconced in their pods, keep moving, normalcy at any price ... High school prison-like on the horizon, conform to this way of life or be outcast, a lifetime of burger-flipping, truck-driving, cashiers, conveyor belts, unimaginable tedious hours of metal-mouthed coffee and plastic food, wrists numb, eyes glassy, time clocks ticking, calendars marked with standardized Hallmark holidays, flag-waving lunacy of convenience stores and gas stations.

I'll be the one to change it, I'll stop the madness, I'll have a baby and bring it up right, I'll teach it to fight the ugliness, to live the right way, in harmony with the earth, no more supermarkets and plastic diapers and baby toys, only politically

correct eco-food from coops, recyclable everything, catalogs of earth-friendly merchandise, Visa, MasterCard. Clad in a loincloth of spruce branches, living in a tee-pee, my baby will think like me, do everything that I can't do, fulfill my dreams of glorious righteousness, because I'm better, none of this is my fault, it's not me, it's the bad ugly stupid people, clogging up my drains with their turds, consuming and procreating and breathing my air, my precious air that's meant for me, me and the other good intelligent sensitive well-educated clever articulate people, God's chosen people, the master race, we mustn't let these morons, these cretins, these useless cocksucking niggers inherit the earth, outbreed them, more eggs, more sacred white patriarchal jism, spurting into the fertile cunts of perfectly-formed Aryan poetesses, we won't stop until everyone on earth thinks like us, total control, boxcars full of stupid people, gas them like Jews, in ovens of fast-food restaurants, eat them, make them into lampshades, an army of babies, with my baby leading them, the new messiah, ripping, tearing the mutant TV-watching shit-babies into pieces, baby arms and legs in piles, triumph of Shakespeare and Descartes and Plato, swells of Handel and Bach, victory.

Wait! What is this thing coming out of my anus? No! It can't be! A turd, a turd, no, no, what is the thing I'm gripping, could it be the steering wheel of a car? Oh God, no, I'm driving down the highway, toxic fumes wafting out of my backside, it's me, it's me, I'm in the dirt, consuming! My kitchen is filled with Tupperware, my walls are smooth and white, with plenty of outlets, appliances beckon me, "turn me on, use me," I'm standing in line, clutching my debit card, some hairless ape is jabbering at me, what is it saying? "Paper or plastic"? My precious baby is a chocolate bunny, flush the toilet, oh the humiliation.

A THIN LAYER OF OILY ROCK

No illusions
Without hope
Seeing the truth
Through a telescope
Footsteps on the moon
It's really out there
Galaxies spin
Ignoring our prayers
Fields of gravity
Crushing space
Waves and particles
Glued into place
By the strong and the weak
The cold and the hot
Radiating light
To a tiny dot
In exploding chaos
There never was a plan
So you better get real
While you still can
It don't mean a thing
Except maybe to us
A flash in the pan
Before we're dust

We were born in water
Without gods
Over eons of time
Against all odds
Slime shook a leg
Took a deep breath
And evolved into predators
Dealing death
Crawling on the land
Climbing up trees
Spreading like a virus
Crossing seas
We became captains
Of our fate
Is it extinction?
Contemplate
Cells of cancer
Killing their host
Better limit growth
Or we'll soon be toast
Just a thin layer
Of oily rock
Is all we'll be
If we sleepwalk

So wise up fast
It's not too late
Respect the future
Don't procreate
More mouths to feed
Is the last thing we need
How dare you breed
It's nothing but greed
No doubt your kids
Will thank you well
For turning Earth
Into living hell
Your precious spawn
Will end up drowned
When they hear your name
They'll spit on the ground
So face the facts
And take a lifetime vow
Of non-procreation
Do it right now
Because the clock's running out
And the world's in pain
And making more babies
Is fucking insane

The survival of the human species is not a
preordained evolutionary program.
—Joshua Lederberg

DITCH THE PHARAOHS

Iara Lee's "Synthetic Pleasures" focuses on transhumanists and their terrifying delusions and hubris. It only considers our assault on our environment from a human point of view, just as American media about the Vietnam War only considered the war's effect on Americans. Nonetheless it's full of memorable quotes, for example:

"... the thing that sets human beings apart from other creatures is a built-in dissatisfaction. There's an itch that we have that can't be scratched. Our efforts to scratch it have created civilization, which is essentially the practice of trying to adapt the environment to us rather than adapting ourselves to the environment." —John Perry Barlow

It seems obvious that "taking the machine inside us and uniting with it" has very real costs and dangers, including the danger of isolating ourselves from the impacts of industrialism until it's too late to mitigate them: "the electricity goes off and you discover you're not living in paradise, you're living in hell." Of course most of the human population already lives in hell*, and that goes double for non-humans.

I agree with Robert Gurland that "problems of ecology, are essentially problems of transformation ... we might in the end transform the world in such a way that we won't be able to adapt to it ... that is, we literally won't be able to live in the world that we create." I just don't agree that the ethics of mass extinction are limited to its impact on humans. The view that Earth is a blank canvas, and that the nonhuman world is merely a backdrop for the human drama, is suspiciously similar to the views colonists had of the New World and its native population, and it's achieving a similar result: extermination.

Stephen Hawking proves himself as delusional as any other transhumanist, by refusing to accept that our survival depends critically on cooperation with nonhumans. Merely asserting that "our only chance of long-term survival is ... to spread out into space" like Daleks doesn't make it a viable plan, and the reflexive repetitiveness of this theme is just more evidence that transhumanism is faith-based. Like any religion, transhumanism is fundamentally escapist, requiring adherents to believe that humanity's destiny lies elsewhere—anywhere but here—when in fact "like Prometheus we are bound, chained to this rock of a brave new world." We will either cooperate, and show altruism towards future humans and nonhumans, or we won't be around. Science can't decide this question because it's pure ethics.

The deeper question is: what are humanity's shared goals if any, and this is obviously connected to our perception of the meaning of life, but again science can't help us since meaning is culturally relative and highly mutable. If our goal is for a tiny percentage of the population to party like Egyptian Pharaohs while everyone else suffers horrifically until Earth is unfit for mammals, we don't need to change anything. Neoliberalism dovetails neatly with new age spirituality in the sense that they're both built on victim-blaming—whatever happens to you, it's because you deserve it—and together they constitute

the perfect ideology for ecocide and neo-feudal militant theocracy along the lines of "The Handmaid's Tale."

However if our goal is to keep earth habitable for humans indefinitely, then maximizing the self-interest of a few sperm and egg lottery winners won't work; instead we need to turn the Titanic around 180 degrees fast, and that means seizing power from the Pharaohs, drastically reducing our population (voluntarily or otherwise) and reorganizing our whole way of life around the fecundity of ecosystems. But make no mistake, either way the long-term future doesn't include us. Bacteria were here first and they will be here last. On this point at least science is abundantly clear.

* "Almost half the world — over three billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day. At least 80% of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day." Source: Global Issues, Poverty Facts and Stats, Jan. 7, 2013.

RUNWAY

Violet jewels glitter in the asphalt, some recessed, others proudly erect in their wire cages, glaring, defiant, thrusting up like crocuses, unmoved by any human presence, evaporating fog to reveal the grim architecture of total control, contours fixed for eternity, nothing less will do. The mechanized juggernaut drags itself across the landscape, and its details overwhelm, tantalize, obscure the senses one by one, leaving only a nightmare of interiors, seductive inner spaces, carpeted boxes, sealed against weather and other acts of god. With centuries of patient observation, imitating organic life, absorbing both substance and form of the natural world, the beast is tamed, molded, pinched between Francis Bacon's rotting fingers, giggling as he paved the way for total war. It's a war of attrition, there's no hurry, time is on the machine's side; there's always room for improvement, tinkering, maximizing, infinitely approaching the zero of optimal conditions, saturation, perfect balance, both male and female, yin and yang, the receptacles, sensors, passive arrays, coils, and vacuums no less important than the ubiquitous industrial phallus, both extremes and every nuance essential for smooth functioning, hard steel worse than useless without soft skin of fetishistic rubber, a yielding calculus to flex the wheels under the terrible loads of this technological anti-triumph, this miracle of organization, hierarchy and relationship, this monstrous vision of human mind made real in riveted aluminum the size of an apartment building, fuming, roaring, jerking, bucking bronco-like with furious power as the turbines lift it off the violet-studded runway, gravity defeated by libraries of data, technical knowledge applied with ruthless zeal by armies of specialists, nothing but pure mathematics between my bottom and the receding landscape that already resembles a child's game, houses with dolls and miniature trees, great spirit keep these Rolls-Royce turbines spinning and deliver me safely to Fort Lauderdale.

Unlike plagues of the dark ages or contemporary diseases we do not understand, the modern plague of overpopulation is soluble by means we have discovered and with resources we possess. What is lacking is not sufficient knowledge of the solution but universal consciousness of the gravity of the problem and education of the billions who are its victim.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

APPROACHING THE END

By Robert Kimberk aka Pastor Kim

As I enter my seventh decade I am increasingly aware the end approaches. The donkey that carries me about is not what he was in my youth, and yet I am content. The paradox is that end does not frighten or depress me. Part of the reason may be that I have succeeded in my ambition to attain happiness. I do not have those things that seem important to other people, no children, no cell phone, no car, no college degree, no credit rating, and no credit card. However, when I wake up in the morning, I have a smile, and I hum a tune on my way to work. Among my joys are the blue sky, the ants in the kitchen, the squirrels, crows, blue jays, nuthatches, mice, and even people. I have had a propagating positive effect that will carry on beyond my life.

There approaches another end that does make me sad. Life on earth is not what it was when I was young in verdant Baltimore. The numbers of bees, frogs, fish, and birds have declined, and I sense that life is struggling. The millions of tons of insecticide produced each year has eroded the foundation. The factory farming of fish and trees has depleted the middle, and without supporting the birds fall from the sky.

To have mankind gotten this far, but then to destroy it all seems tragic. My hope is that those that follow me will avert the tragedy and bring back to earth the paradise it once was. It will require a reevaluation of what is important. Learn to live with the bugs, squirrels, and mice. Their health is ours as well. Their joy increases ours.

Our lives are lived in flamboyant denial of our fundamental biologic equivalence to all other animals and it is only in death that we embrace our natural place in the global ecosystem.

—Diane Karluk, M.D.

A NEAR-PERFECT DEATH

I have no idea how I'm going to die, but I know how I'd *like* to die: hopefully of old age and painlessly, like my mother who died on Thanksgiving in the apartment I grew up in. She had a massive cerebral hemorrhage in her kitchen, was probably unconscious by the time she hit the floor, and never regained consciousness. Sounds good to me.

She almost burned the apartment building down, but luckily someone five floors up smelled smoke and called the fire department. My mother had disabled her smoke detectors, because she was a chain smoker. Whatever she was cooking was reduced to a thick deposit of charcoal in a saucepan. It's truly bizarre that she died while cooking. I have vivid memories from my teenage years of our refrigerator containing nothing but cigarettes, white wine, and yogurt. Could she have instinctively avoided cooking for all those years because she knew it would lead to her demise?

My mother also proved (as if it needed further proof) that life is unjust. She chain-smoked for over half a century, was a raging alcoholic, ate whatever she wanted and didn't exercise, and died at eighty-four. I've known health fanatics who didn't make it half that far.

I arrived at the neurology ICU a day later, and was escorted to a private room in which my mother's body lay, ghastly pale and breathing in forced synchronization with machines. The

staff were grimly certain that she would never awaken, and in case I had any lingering doubts, one of the doctors took it upon himself to relieve me of them. He pulled up my mother's hospital gown, pinched her chest hard, and assured me that her involuntary response—a spasmodic inward contraction of the shoulders—was a sure sign of devastating brain damage. He then lifted up her eyelids and demonstrated that her eyes were pointing in completely different directions, another fatal sign. The entity I had known as my mother was gone, irretrievably lost, and all that remained was biological rubble.

The doctors could keep her rubble alive indefinitely if I so wished, or they could disconnect it from life support and let nature take its course. I chose the latter in accordance with the ironclad terms of my mother's living will. My mother was a firm Church of Euthanasia supporter and doubtless would have appreciated that the Reverend got to make the final call.

I was given the option to attend the proceedings, but after careful deliberation, I declined. I figured that ICU workers see death routinely and are largely inured to it, and moreover it wasn't their mother who was going to be gurgling and rattling. I couldn't see the sense in further traumatizing myself. There wouldn't be any last words. There was literally no one left to say goodbye to. In this instance, I don't like to watch.

I spent much of the following year cleaning up after my mother's life, for example selling or donating her possessions, emptying her apartment, and so forth. Nothing puts things in perspective like stuffing your mother's underwear down a trash chute in the middle of the night. In such a situation, it's hard to avoid grasping the ephemerality of existence.

Yes, existence is a curse for many people, but just based on the fact that you're able to read this, I doubt that you're one of them. Life can be hellish, but it can also be sweet. Above all it is *short*. You will understand this better as time passes. Think of a time-lapse movie that lets you observe the stately passage of the sun overhead, and the shadows moving, getting longer. This is your life. If you're one of the lucky ones, you will seek and find wisdom, and then your life will be over.

For those who win the sperm and egg lottery, and consequently possess some freedom to determine their fate, there's an inconceivably vast universe to be experienced and studied. It contains treasures and horrors and everything in between. Even the simplest pursuits can be worthwhile. Knowledge, skill, friendship, love, trust; are all worth gaining. Communal goals such as peace, justice, egalitarianism, solidarity, the future, these are all worth struggling for. Contemplation can be rewarding and empowering. Sex can be intensely pleasurable and life-changing if the chemistry's right. And all this is barely scratching the surface of what's achievable, if you have lust for life.

The Church of Euthanasia advocates voluntary population reduction in order to restore balance between humans and nonhumans. Members take a lifetime vow of nonprocreation.

Edited by Chris Korda and Scooter Burch.
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